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ABSTRACT

An experimental cooperative graduate program for practicing educational administrators, offered by the University of Victoria, British Columbia, provides adult educators with opportunities for relating theory, practice, and research to resolve practical administrative problems. A candidate must be approved as an intern by an educational agency. The 14-month program consists of three components: academic, research, and internship. While completing courses on organizational theory, governance, personnel management, philosophy of administration and educational planning, associates are required to attend a series of professional seminars and professional luncheons. Associates become familiar with the sociopolitical culture of organizations and observe political interest groups interacting. To be awarded a masters degree, associates are required to defend their research reports in an oral examination. The professional training program is designed to develop adult educators who are knowledgeable of organizations, politically astute, skillful in interpersonal relations, and able to manage change. (SW)

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: A NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: A NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Our society is undergoing dynamic changes as a consequence of advances in technology, new social norms and a depressed economy. The Third Wave of change, a descriptive title which Toffler (1980) has assigned the present societal forces, is:

> Tearing our families apart, rocking our economy, paralyzing our political systems, shattering our values ... It challenges all the old power relationships, the privileges and prerogatives of the endangered elites of today, and provides the backdrop against which the key power struggles of tomorrow will be fought.
>
> (Toffler, 1980, p. 26)

Under these conditions, the future is unknown. Unlike their grandparents the children of today cannot perceive, with any degree of accuracy, what tomorrow will bring.

Many individuals are turning to colleges, schools, social agencies and churches for assistance in preparing both themselves and their children for our modern society. People are beginning to realize that their working life, as well as work day, is being shortened. Similarly, people are now accepting that during their work life they will be involved in several different occupations for which they will have to be trained. The accelerated pace of modern life, has Kratzmann, Byrne and Worth (1980) note, seems 'to lessen family bonds and to promote a variety of social problems including rising rates of divorce, separation, drug and alcohol abuse, child-battering, teenage pregnancies and incidences of crime" (p. 8). Individuals are seeking assistance to prevent these social issues entering

their lives. Life-long learning appears to becoming a reality for a growing number of Canadians.

How institutions respond to increasing demands for adult education will be determined by the quality of leadership provided by educational administrators. According to Fast (1977), if educational institutions are to operate efficiently and provide the services society needs 'we must have people in leadership roles who are not afraid to take positions, to take risks, to develop new policies and to meet needs" (p. 37). While Peach (1975) maintains that future leaders must be highly moral individuals committed to inducing educational and social change.

At a Phi Delta Kappan in Victoria, British Columbia, Campbell (1979), while speaking on educational leadership, stated that effective educational administrators possess: (1) above average intelligence; (2) mental stability; (3) a high energy level; (4) the ability to provide an organization with direction; (5) sound interpersonal relations skills; (6) a willingness to take risks; and (7) political astuteness. The author would add to this list, a good self image, wide teaching experience, a commitment to life long learning and an awareness of their own values.

Do leaders of this calibre exist in education? More specifically, do adult educators possess the characteristics necessary to qualify for the title 'dynamic leader'? The answer to both these questions must be no. Educational administrators have traditionally been conservative, reactive, individuals who have tended to perceive themselves as responsible for maintaining the status quo. Usually, administrators have employed

incremental policies to initiate any type of reform. Lindblom (1959) correctly labelled this form of policy-making as 'the science of muddling through'. One of the major reasons administrators have adopted this practice is because incrementalism is politically expedient (Dye, 1978).

According to Hoyle (1981), preparation programmes for administrators are more concerned with 'here and now' issues rather than future contingencies. If this observation is correct, then the majority of practising and prospective administrators who graduate from these programmes will be more concerned with the present than the future. Many administrators, in the authors opinion tend to devote most of their time to management issues, those problems which "are more routine, definitive, programmatic, and susceptible to quantitative methods" (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 5). The difficult administrative issues, those "aspects [of administration] dealing more with the formulation of purpose, the value laden issues and the human component of organizations" (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 5) are generally postponed until another day. Yet, these are the issues which require attention if educational organizations are to provide the learning experiences which children and adults are requesting.

Very few adult educators in British Columbia occupy senior administrative positions in community colleges, vocational institutes and public schools. Many factors account for this situation. Adult educators tend to be mainly interested and concerned about the needs of students. If discussions and activities are not related to classroom activities adult educators tend to be disinterested in such affairs. Due to this orientation, adult educators rarely attend social events which offer them opportunities

to interact with senior administrators, trustees or college board members. As a result they are not usually highly visiable in educational organizations which is an important factor in the selection of administrators.

By mainly focusing their attention on student needs and instructional practices, adult educators possess limited knowledge of how an institution operates. Budgeting procedures, the micro-politics of an organization, strategic planning, community relations, supervision of staff and planned change are unknown to them. In general, adult educators are 'politically naive', 'conceptually blind' and 'economically ignorant'. Those adult educators who want to become administrators do not possess the basic knowledge and skills to be even considered for such positions.

A small number of adult educators, however, serve as department chairpersons or coordinators in institutions which offer a wide variety of adult education programmes. The administrative behaviour exhibited by most of these individuals is that of a traditional, conservative, leader. Therefore, they tend to be reactive rather than proactive decision-makers. Since most adult students study part-time, adult education instructors are usually hired as part-time employees. These administrators operate from a weak power base. Adult students, instructors and administrators are often viewed as 'fringe' people, a perception which frequently results in them being the first members of an institution to experience the realities of government fiscal constraints.

A 'new breed' of adult educator is needed who is knowledgeable of organizations, politically astute, skillful in interpersonal relations and aware of how to 'manage' change. This individual will be able to

compete more successfully than his colleagues for administrative positions. When appointed as an administrator he/she will provide an institution with direction and ensure the interests of adult educators are given adequate consideration. Present preparation programmes for administrators do not offer adult educators the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to become anticipatory, proactive leaders. New professional development programmes are urgently needed which will provide adult educators with the learning experiences they require.

An experimental graduate cooperative programme for practising educational administrators, offered by the University of Victoria, British Columbia, provides adult educators with unique opportunities for relating theory, practice and research to resolve practical administrative problems. Successful applicants, who must possess administrative experience, commence their studies in July. Prior to being accepted as an educational administration associate, a title designed to distinguish cooperative students from other graduate students, a candidate must be approved as an intern by an educational agency.

The graduate cooperative programme, as shown in Figure 1, extends over fourteen months and is comprised of three basic components, namely : (1) an academic component; (2) a research component; and (3) an internship component. While completing their academic studies, which consists of courses on organizational theory, governance, personnel management, philosophy of administration and educational planning, associates are required to attend a series of professional seminars and several professional luncheons. The seminars are designed to familiarize associates with the

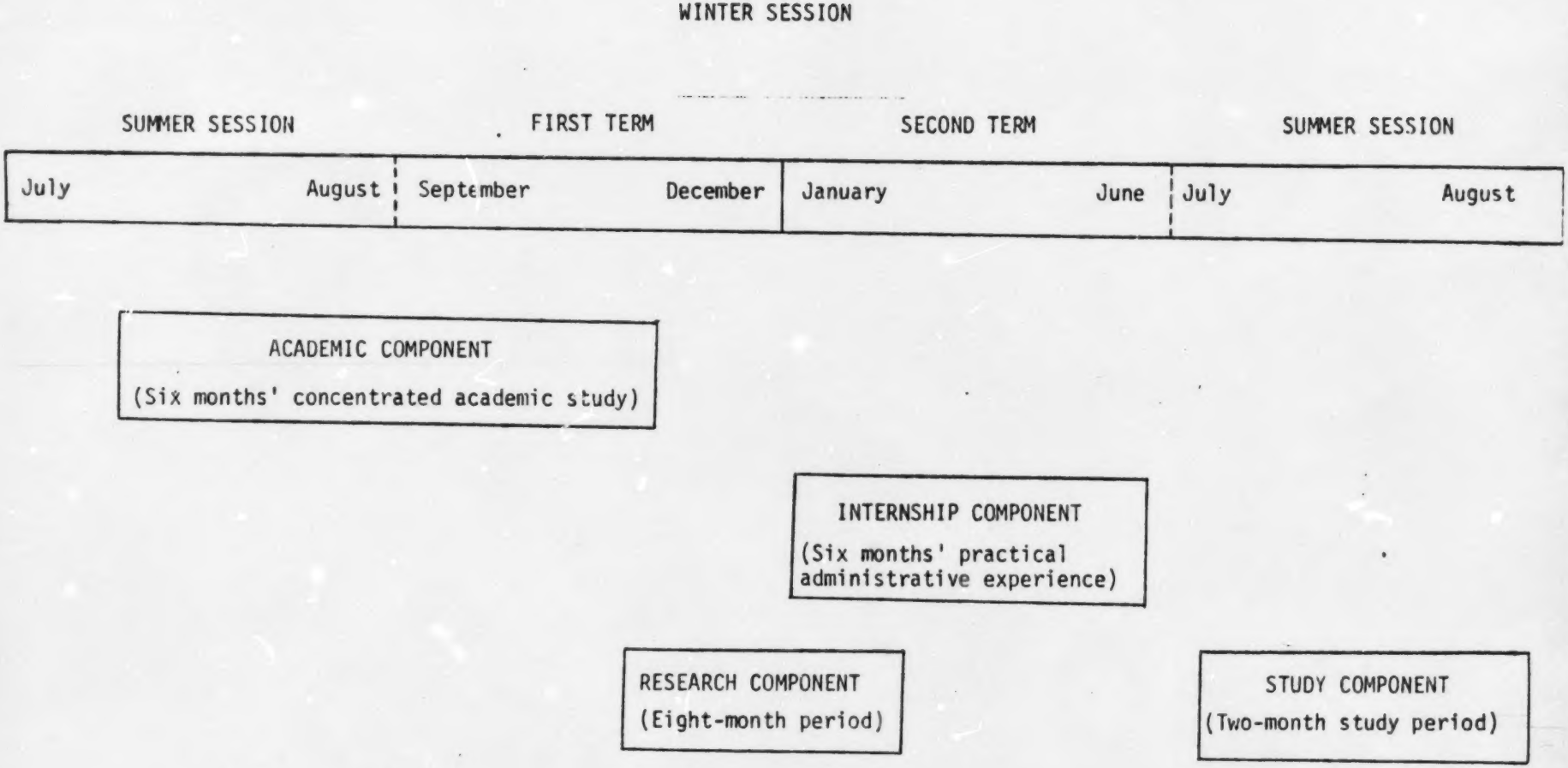

FIGURE 1

THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION GRADUATE CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAM

political forces operating in different educational settings. Guest speakers are asked to be as forthright as conditions permit about the 'political' aspects of specific educational issues. The luncheons provide associates with opportunities to socialize with senior administrators, to increase their visibility and to report on their research studies.

At the beginning of the programme, a brief job description is jointly written by the associate and his field supervisor. Also, the associate with the assistance of his field supervisor identifies a problem the sponsoring agency considers is worthy of being investigated. These two activities enable the associate to become familiar with the operation of the sponsoring agency to establish a collegial relationship with his field supervisor and to adequately prepare himself/herself for the internship.

Early in January, associates commence their duties as administrative interns. Usually, field supervisors assign the associates few tasks in the first month, this allows them to become acquainted with the socio-political culture of organizations. Most associates take advantage of this period to complete a comprehensive literature review for their investigations.

During the internship period, field supervisors are required to provide associates with opportunities to observe political interest groups interacting. The supervisors analyze different sessions to sensitize the associates to the micro-politics of organizations. Often field supervisors will discuss with associates the importance of administrative theories in better understanding practical issues. All associates receive

a monthly salary for the services they provide the sponsoring organizations. Usually, the associates are hired as temporary employers to comply with collective agreements.

To be awarded a Masters degree, associates are required to defend their research reports in an oral examination. Though discussion centres around the research problem, questions are frequently asked about all aspects of the programme of studies. Both field supervisors and University scholars participate in the examination. The associates, often to everyone's surprise enjoy the experience.

Our modern society is characterized by continuous change, a phenomenon which is drastically changing the way we live, work and play. Many people are turning to community colleges, technical institutes and public schools for assistance in coping effectively with these changes. How institutions respond to these now demands for further education will be determined, to a significant extent, by the leadership provided by adult education administrators. Traditionally, these administrators have been conservative, reactive and conforming, administrative behaviour which is inappropriate for managing contemporary educational institutions. A 'new breed' of administrator is required who will provide an institution with direction and ensure the educational needs of adults are satisfied. Leaders of this type will not be forthcoming unless adult educators have access to professional development programmes designed to provide them with the new administrative competencies.

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